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MINUTES

OF THE

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

12th August, 1972

Meeting held in Utrecht, The Netherlands

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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Executive Committee Meeting - Utrecht, The Netherlands

12th August, 1972

PRESENT:

Presidents:
Rev. Dr. W.A. Visser't Hooft (Honorary)
Dr. (Mrs.) K. Takeda Cho
Rt. Rev. Bishop H. Lilje
Rev. Dr. E.A. Payne
Rev. Dr. J.C. Smith
Rt. Rev. A.H. Zulu

Officers:
Dr. M.M. Thomas
Miss Pauline M. Webb
Dr. Eugene C. Blake

Members:
Rev. Dr. I.B. Bokeleale
Mr. J.V. Faune
Mr. D.E. Johnson
Prof. Dr. J.M. Lochman
Rt. Hon. Earl of March
Rev. Dr. R.J. Marshall
Bishop Dr. R.C. Nichols
His Eminence Metropolitan Nikodim
Rev. Dr. J. Rossel
Prof. T. Sabev
Bishop K. Sarkissian
General T.B. Simatupang
Dr. R. von Weizsäcker
Mrs. J. Wesonga

Consultant:
His Eminence Metropolitan Emilianos

APOLOGIES

His Holiness Patriarch German
Pastor K. Gottschald
His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Miss B. Bam
Pastor C. Barbey
Rev. O.L. Bolioli
Fr. V. Borovoy
Rev. Dr. A.A. Brash
Rev. V.E.W. Hayward
Rev. Dr. A. van den Heuvel
Dr. W.B. Kennedy
Prof. N.A. Nissiotis
Mr. L.J. Niilus
Mr. F. Northam
Mr. S.J. Park
Rev. Dr. P.A. Potter
Dr. S.J. Samartha
Rev. W. Simpfendörfer
Rev. Dr. E.L. Smith
Mr. G. Skobei
Mr. J. Taylor
Pastor J.J. Thomsen
Dr. L. Vischer

MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Finance Sub-Committee

Rt. Hon. Earl of March (Chairman)
Rev. Dr. I.B. Bokeleale
Mr. J.V. Faune
Rev. Dr. R.J. Marshall
His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton (absent)
Bishop Dr. R.C. Nichols
Rev. Dr. J. Rossel
Prof. T. Sabev
Dr. R. von Weizsäcker

Nomination Sub-Committee

Bishop K. Sarkissian (Chairman)
Pastor K. Gottschald (absent)
Mr. D.E. Johnson
Prof. Dr. J.M. Lochman
His Eminence Metropolitan Nikodim
General T.B. Simatupang
Miss Pauline M. Webb
Mrs. J. Wesonga

Staffing Sub-Committee

Miss Pauling M. Webb (Chairman)
Pastor K. Gottschald (absent)
Mr. D.E. Johnson
Prof. Dr. J.M. Lochman
Bishop K. Sarkissian
General T.B. Simatupang
Mrs. J. Wesonga

Priorities Sub-Committee

Bishop Dr. R.C. Nichols (Chairman)
Rev. Dr. I.B. Bokeleale
Mr. D.E. Johnson
Prof. Dr. J.M. Lochman
Bishop K. Sarkissian
Rt. Hon. Earl of March (Chairman of Finance Sub-Committee, ex officio)
President D.A. Wischmann (Vice-Chairman of Finance Sub-Committee, ex officio)

The meeting convened at 09.00h. on Saturday, 12th August, 1972. Opening worship was led by the Chairman.

1. Roll Call

The General Secretary called the roll, presenting apologies from His Holiness Patriarch German, Pastor K. Gottschald and His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held in Auckland, New Zealand, from 9th - 12th February 1972, having been previously circulated, were confirmed.

3. Report of the General Secretary

The General Secretary said he had only two matters to bring to the attention of the Committee in view of the fact that he would be presenting a full report to the Central Committee. One of these would come under another item of the agenda. The other referred to the instruction given to the staff to pursue enquiries among member churches to see whether the present Rules of Debate (Rule XIV) needed modifying or clarifying. It had been suggested that they were not clearly understood by all members of Central Committee and Assembly. After fairly extensive enquiries he was able to report that no recommendation regarding a change in the Rules of Debate seemed to be called for.

4. Arrangements for Central Committee

Mr. Thomsen drew attention to the provisional programme for the meeting of Central Committee, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He called attention to one or two changes which had been made since the programme was drawn up. It was AGREED that the provisional programme as amended be approved.
Mr. Thomsen said that attendance at Central Committee would be good; only twelve members had indicated that they would not be present and would not be sending a substitute.

Appointments to Sub-Committees and Groups.

Copies of provisional lists of appointments to Sub-Committees and Groups, prepared by the Officers, were before the meeting. It was AGREED that general approval be given to these appointments, subject to any changes which might become necessary.

Worship.

Mr. Johnson reported on plans for worship. Arrangements were well in hand, though some details remained to be worked out. It was hoped that the worship in Central Committee would be regarded as an integral part of the meeting. Each day would begin and end with a brief period of worship and in addition there would be on some days a corporate act of worship from 12.00 to 12.30 and on others a period of bible study from 15.45 to 16.30 before the group meetings.

5. Chairman's Report

Copies of the Chairman's Report to the Central Committee were circulated, and members were asked to let the Chairman have any comments they might wish to make on the points raised in it.

6. Applications for membership

Mr. Barbey presented a report on applications for membership received since the last meeting of the Committee.

a) Applications for membership

It was AGREED that the Executive Committee recommend to Central Committee that the following applications for membership be accepted, these churches having accepted the Basis and satisfied the requirements of the Rules:

Eglise protestante méthodiste au Dahomey-Togo
Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Filipinas
The Lutheran Church in Liberia
Igreja Reformada Latino-Americana.

b) Applications for Associate membership

It was AGREED that the Executive Committee recommend to Central Committee that the application for Associate membership of the Iglesia Metodista del Peru be accepted, this church having accepted the Basis and satisfied the requirements of the Rules.

c) Associate Council

Mr. Barbey reported that until two years ago the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland, as Associate Council of the World Council of Churches, had grouped German churches in both the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic. Since then the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in der DDR had been formed by the churches in the German Democratic Republic and this Council had now expressed its desire to become an Associate Council. It was AGREED -

that the Executive Committee recommend to Central Committee that the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in der DDR be accepted as an Associate Council of the World Council of Churches.

d) Application from the Japanese Orthodox Church

Attention was drawn to the discussion in the previous meeting of the Executive Committee regarding the application for membership of the Japanese Orthodox Church. No action had been taken at that time and the matter had been referred for further consideration by the Committee at its present meeting.

After discussion it was AGREED -

That the Executive Committee, having received and considered an application for membership from the Japanese Orthodox Church, notes that the application in this case of Rule I.5. has presented certain difficulties and led to some differences of opinion.

The Executive Committee is of the opinion that decision on this application cannot be much longer delayed. Accordingly, it resolves:

(1) that the Executive Committee recommends to the Central Committee that the Japanese Orthodox Church be received into the membership of the World Council of Churches
but

(2) that the General Secretary be instructed not to carry this recommendation to the present meeting of the Central Committee

(3) that the General Secretary be instructed to report this action to all the Eastern Orthodox member churches that they may have an opportunity to comment on the issue

(4) that a further report be presented by the General Secretary to the Executive Committee before the next meeting of the Central Committee.

e) Representation of Associate Churches in the Assembly

Dr. Blake presented a memorandum drawing attention to the difficulties caused in relation to full participation in the ecumenical movement of some of the smaller churches owing to the application of the revised criteria applying to full membership. These criteria now included the provision that in order to become a member a church should ordinarily have at least 25,000 members. This debarred some churches which had developed as minority churches, for example in Latin America, and precluded the possibility of election to the Central Committee of representatives of churches which before independence had had full delegates appointed to the Assembly as part of the delegation of a mother-church. The memorandum set out two possible alternatives :

"a) that in a given region associate member churches form a grouping which would be recognized by the Central Committee and have a right as such for a full delegation to the assemblies, for instance, the Methodist Churches in Latin America;

b) that the representatives of the associate member churches at the assemblies be eligible for the Central Committee."

It was AGREED -

that the question of representation of associate churches in the Assembly be referred to the Assembly Committee of Central Committee.

7. Reports from Unit Committees

Brief reports on the meetings of the Unit Committees were received from Dr. Brash (Unit II), Mr. Simpfendörfer (Unit III) and Dr. Potter (Unit I). All three expressed the view that the meeting had been useful and constructive but in every case there had been considerable uncertainty about the exact function of the Unit Committee and the degree of authority it possessed in relation to the work of the Units and their sub-units. The reports listed the matters which would be brought to the attention of the Central Committee.

Dr. Visser't Hooft raised the question of the role of the Executive Committee in the new structure. Should matters of major importance be brought first to the Executive Committee or would they now go direct from the Unit Committees. After some discussion, during which it was pointed out that the new structure was still in an experimental stage, it was AGREED -

that the Executive Committee at its next meeting should give some consideration to the future role of the Executive Committee and the functions and authority of the Unit Committees in the light of experience at the Utrecht meetings.

8. Future Meetings

Mr. Thomsen reported on arrangements for future meetings.

a) Executive Committee

It was AGREED -

i) that the next meeting of the Executive Committee be held in Bangalore from Sunday, January 14 to Thursday, January 18 1973, participants to arrive in Bangalore on January 13 and if possible stay over for an excursion on Friday, January 19;

ii) that the meeting immediately prior to the Central Committee in August 1973 be held in Helsinki on Saturday, August 18.

Mr. Thomsen said that so far there was no definite proposal regarding the January/February 1974 meeting, though a tentative suggestion had been made that this might be held in Latin America.

b) Central Committee

Consideration had been given to the possibility of holding the 1974 Central Committee meeting in an Eastern European country but this had not proved practicable. It was AGREED to recommend to Central Committee that the staff be asked to explore the possibility of holding the 1974 meeting in July or August in West Germany or Geneva.

9. Report of Finance Sub-Committee

Lord March presented the report of the Finance Sub-Committee.

a) The position in regard to the General Budget had substantially improved since the last meeting of the Executive Committee. There was a surplus for 1971 and increased resources were envisaged for 1972, 1973 and 1974 which would make it possible to maintain the present level during this period. The main reason for the improvement had been the seriousness with which the various committees had treated the financial situation. It was important to note that though some relief might be felt because the immediate financial crisis had been overcome, there would be substantial additional liabilities in the foreseeable future, not least in the financing of the Fifth Assembly.

b) It must be borne in mind that in 1971 a substantial surplus had been made on foreign exchange arising from changes in the monetary system. The Finance Committee would be discussing the allocation of these surpluses.

c) The sharing of responsibility for financing particular sub-units from the resources of sub-units and departments which obtained their funds from their own constituencies was proving a difficult problem. The justification in principle of this practice would be discussed by the Finance Committee.

d) Unit II Committee had requested a special action in relation to investments in Southern Africa. It was felt that there was need for a general review of the investment policy of the Council and the matter would be considered by the Finance Committee and also in a joint meeting of the Finance Committee and Policy Reference Committee II.

e) It was understood that certain Unit Committees would be requesting the Policy Reference Committee to increase programmes and thereby increase financial requirements. It was important that such requests should come to the Finance Committee and the Sub-Committee on Programme Priorities at the earliest possible moment so that these committees could consider and comment upon them.

10. Sub-Committee on Programme Priorities

Bishop Nichols spoke to the report of the Sub-Committee on Programme Priorities which was in the hands of members, outlining the process that had led to its appointment as a standing committee of the Executive Committee. The report before the meeting was the outcome of serious consideration by the Programme Priorities Committee of the whole work of the Council, but it contained recommendations for cuts in staff and programme which had been framed in the light of what the Committee had understood at the time of its extended meeting in Geneva in May to be a severe financial crisis.

As the Executive Committee had heard in the report of the Finance Sub-Committee, this crisis no longer existed and it was not now proposed to make any specific recommendations to Central Committee at this meeting. The purpose of the Executive Committee in constituting the Programme Priorities Committee had been not only to provide for consideration of possible reductions in the light of budget stringency but to secure an examination of the Council's programmes in the light of their relevance to the situation today. The Sub-Committee had no authority in its own right, its mandate being to carry out its work on behalf of the Executive Committee. Any recommendations arising from its deliberations would be considered and acted upon by the Executive Committee itself.

After discussion it was AGREED -

> that the report of the Sub-Committee on Programme Priorities be received and remitted to the Programme Priorities Committee of Central Committee as the basic working paper for its discussion.

11. Presidents' Pentecostal Message

Dr. Blake drew attention to difficulties that had arisen in recent years in connection with the Presidents' Pentecostal Message. In particular Patriarch German had indicated that he would prefer not to have his name associated with the Message in future. On Dr. Blake's suggestion Dr. Visser't Hooft was asked to convene a meeting of the Presidents to discuss possible action. At a later session Dr. Visser't Hooft presented a recommendation from the Presidents and after some discussion this was ADOPTED as follows:

a) that an opportunity be sought by the General Secretariat to meet with Patriarch German to discuss the possibility of reaching agreement on the preparation of a common Pentecostal Message;

b) that should this not prove possible, one of the Presidents should be asked each year to prepare the Message in consultation with the General Secretary, the message to be signed by the President who had been asked to collaborate in its preparation and also by the General Secretary.

Dr. Visser't Hooft pointed out that the normal period between meetings of the Assembly would permit time for each President to undertake the preparation of the Message.

12. Report of the Staffing Sub-Committee

The report of the Staffing Sub-Committee was considered in closed session and the minutes are circulated separately.

13. Report of Nominations Sub-Committee

The report of the Nominations Sub-Committee was received in closed session and approved for presentation to Central Committee, with the request that the attention of the Commission on Faith and Order be drawn to the dispropotionately small representation from Asian countries in its membership.